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## **National equine health monitoring**

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**National Equine Health Monitoring:  
Establishment of a health- and disease database for the Danish horse population.**

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The number of horses in Denmark is estimated to amount 200,000 to 300,000 horses. This places Denmark as one of the countries in Europe with the largest number of horses per capita. The horse industry in Denmark has a turnover of more than 3 billion Euros. Welfare issues, including legislation, and the increasing demand for more knowledge on possible interactions between long term health, performance and genetics, has highlighted the need for systematic collection and accessibility of information regarding the use and the health of the horses. A number of existing Danish databases cover single topics and/or varying parts of the horse population. Notifiable diseases are reported to the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. However, medical records are kept at private and individual equine clinics, and there is no mandatory or organized reporting of medical treatments on horses, apart from the common EU-legislation. Also, there are no systematized veterinary insurance databases. An existing, large database, managed by the horse breeding organizations, currently registers breeding data and some performance data of some sports horses, mainly jumping and dressage results. A newly adopted Danish supplement to an EU-regulation has now ensured that demographic basic data on *all* horses in Denmark will be recorded in this database in the future. This has provided the basis for an extension of the existing database, and the formation of a Danish horse database, containing not only demographic and performance data, but also health data.

The objective of the present project is to investigate the scientific foundation of the establishment of a national health- and disease database together with thorough prioritization, organization and coordination of the information, so that the database meets the stakeholders' needs.

A stakeholder analysis of qualitative methods combined with a questionnaire survey will aim at mapping the different needs, attitudes and visions. The stakeholder groups include horse owners, breeders, trainers, veterinarians, farriers, animal welfare organizations, horse insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry, suppliers of medical equipment, authorities, researchers, laboratories, ordinary citizens and possibly others. The results will be analyzed and underlie the later model of the database. The expected results of the work will be a scientifically founded protocol, suggesting the model for a functional, usable, rational and sustainable database for health and disease in the Danish horse population.